

Serial No. 09/892,212

## REMARKS

### Status of the Claims

Claims 1-4, 6-20, 24, 26-44 are pending herein. Claim 6 has been cancelled above, and claims 5, 21-23 and 25 have been canceled previously, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 20, 24 and 26-29 are allowed.

Claims 4, 18 and 19 are objected to by the Examiner. Objected to claims 4, 18 and 19 have been amended to incorporate the base claim from which they depend and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance.

Claims 7-17 and 41-44 presently depend from currently allowable claim 4 and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 30-40 presently require an aluminum-silicon carbide support or a zirconium alloy support, neither of which is taught or suggested by the currently cited art.

### Claim rejection under 35 USC § 102(b) in view of Furuse et al.

Claims 30-32, 34 and 40-44 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Furuse et al., JP 405238855A. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and its supporting remarks. Moreover, this rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendments. Specifically, claims 40-44 presently depend from currently allowable claim 4 and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance. Claims 30-32 and 34 require an aluminum-silicon carbide support or a zirconium alloy support, neither of which is taught or suggested by Furuse et al.

### Claim rejection under 35 USC § 102(a) in view of Otsuki

Claims 30-37 and 40-44 are rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by Otsuki (Pub. No. US 2001/0003271 A1). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and its supporting remarks. Moreover, this rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendments. Specifically, claims 40-44 presently depend from currently allowable claim 4 and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance. Claims 30-37 require an aluminum-silicon carbide support or a zirconium alloy support, neither of which is taught or suggested by Otsuki.

Serial No. 09/892,212

**Claim rejection under 35 USC § 102(b) in view of Sarin**

Claims 30-32, 34-36 and 40-44 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Sarin (U.S. Patent No. 5,035,923). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and its supporting remarks. Moreover, this rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendments. Specifically, claims 40-44 presently depend from currently allowable claim 4 and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance. Claims 30-32 and 34-36 require an aluminum-silicon carbide support or a zirconium alloy support, neither of which is taught or suggested by Sarin.

**Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a) over Otsuki in view of O'Donnell et al.**

Claims 1-3, 6-17 and 38-44 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Otsuki in view of O'Donnell et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,613,442). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and its supporting remarks. Moreover, this rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendments. Specifically, claims 7-17 and 41-44 presently depend from currently allowable claim 4 and are therefore believed to be in a condition for allowance. Claims 1-3 require a zirconium alloy support, which is neither taught nor suggested by Otsuki or O'Donnell et al. Claim 6 has been canceled.

**Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a) over Otsuki**

Claims 38 and 39 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Otsuki. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and its supporting remarks. Moreover, this rejection is believed to be moot in view of the above amendments. Specifically, claims 38 and 39 require an aluminum-silicon carbide support or a zirconium alloy support, neither of which is taught or suggested by Otsuki.

**CONCLUSION**

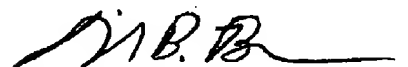
Applicants submit that the claims of the present invention are in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited.

Serial No. 09/892,212

**FEES**

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Respectfully submitted,



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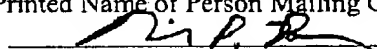
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